

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 VO-03 SCA-01 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4682

INFO US MISSION GENEVA 307

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KUALA LUMPUR 5515

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, MY

SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEE BOAT CASES: INTERVIEWS IN MALAYSIA

1. EMBOFF JUST RETURNED FROM FIVE DAY TRIP TO MALAYSIA'S EAST COAST WHERE HE INTERVIEWED OVER 130 REFUGEES. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS SHOW APPROXIMATELY 50 PERCENT MAY BE ELIGIBLE UNDER EPP CRITERIA. ALTHOUGH OUR JUDGEMENT IS THAT THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE IN NO RPT NO IMMEDIATE DANGER OF BEING EXPELLED, GOM NONETHELESS EAGER TO SEE RESULTS FROM US OR OTHER COUNTRIES. INFORMATION ON REFUGEES HAVING TIES WITH OTHER COUNTRIES HAS BEEN PASSED ORALLY TO UNHCR. WE WILL USE THREE DAY HOLIDAY WEEKEND TO REFINE DATE FOLLOWING WHICH WE WILL FORWARD CUSTOMARY VISA FALCON AND BIO CABLES.

2. SUBJECT VERY MUCH ON EVERYONE'S MINDS HERE IS THAT OF CONTINUED AVAILABILITY OF RECOUPED NUMBERS FROM EPP. LOCAL UNHCR REP SAMPATKUMAR IS QUITE WORRIED THAT ONCE WORD GETS OUT THAT U.S. PROGRAM IS EFFECTIVELY OVER THAT HE WILL HAVE LOST ANY ABILITY TO PERSUADE LITTORAL NATIONS TO ACCEPT PRINCIPAL OF FIRST ASYLUM. NOW THAT MEDIA INTEREST HAS BEEN AROUSED WE ALSO EXPECT PRESS QUERIES ON FUTURE OF U.S. PROGRAM, PARTICULARLY AS PROGRAM IS ABOUT TO END. THERE ALSO ARE SOME 140 OR SO REFUGEES CURRENTLY IN EAST MALAYSIAN STATE OF SARAWAK WHO WE HAVE YET TO INTERVIEW.

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3. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE ADVISE US, TO EXTENT KNOWN,

(A) NUMBERS REMAINING AVAILABLE FROM EPP, (B) PROSPECTS FOR
ADDITIONAL LEGISLATION FOR FURTHER REFUGEE PROGRAM; (C) GUIDANCE
FOR HANDLING PRESS QUERIES ON FOREGOING; AND (D) WHAT OTHER
COUNTRIES ARE DOING IN RESPONSE TO UNHCR APPEAL ON REGION

WIDE BASIS, SINCE OUR PERSPECTIVE ON THIS POINT IS LIMITED.
UNDERHILL

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